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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 08/20/08

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1) TOP HEADLINES

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Matsunaga takes men's 55-kg wrestling silver, Yumoto men's 60-kg wrestling bronze at Olympics

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Matsushita, Secom to offer services via wireless broadband network

Sankei:

Russia still trying to place Georgia under its control

2) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

- (1) Commotion expected at next Diet session
- (2) Promote reform of bid system to prevent collusive bidding

Mainichi:

- (1) Sumo wrestler arrested: Stable master and association must assume heavy responsibility

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- (2) Push for measure to increase number of lawyers

Yomiuri:

- (1) Continued refueling mission minimum obligation for Japan
- (2) Full education for foreign wrestlers needed

Nikkei:

- (1) Government must face Diet session with determination to dissolve Lower House if necessary
- (2) Urban Corporation's bond floatation before failure causing distrust

Sankei:

- (1) Have long enough Diet session to enable extension of refueling mission
- (2) Don't allow retreat from war on terror with Musharraf's resignation

Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) Diet session should be held earlier
- (2) Pakistan must take a step forward to become democratic state

Akahata:

- (1) Chart course for education based on Constitution

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, August 19

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2008

09:13

Had a video message for the JAPAN NET international student exchange program taped at LDP headquarters. Afterward attended LDP executive meeting.

10:13

Met METI Minister Nikai at the Kantei, followed by Finance Minister Yosano.

12:01

Attended a government, ruling coalition liaison meeting.

14:30

Met Japan Institute of International Affairs President Yukio Sato, followed by Chairman Yotaro Kobayashi and Vice Chairman Takashi Saito of the Tokyo-Beijing Forum Executive Committee.

15:27

Met Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Masuda.

18:43

Met Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Futahashi.

19:07

Returned to his official residence.

4) Mondale, Foley to join Obama's advisory team on Japan

ASAHI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
August 20, 2008

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Yoichi Kato, Washington

It was revealed yesterday that two former ambassadors to Japan -- former Vice President Walter Mondale and former Speaker of the House Thomas Foley -- have joined the policy advisory group of presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Sen. Barack Obama as honorary advisors.

5) Government asks WTO to set up panel for EU tariffs on IT

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 9) (Full)
August 20, 2008

The government announced yesterday that it will ask the World Trade Organization (WTO) to set up a grievance committee (panel), claiming that the European Union (EU) has imposed improper high tariffs on three kinds of IT equipment, including a multifunction printer. Japan, together with the U.S. and Taiwan, will call for a panel on Aug. 20.

6) Coordination underway for Prime Minister Fukuda to attend UNGA

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2008

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda yesterday began coordination with the possibility of delivering a speech at the United Nations General Assembly, which will start on Sept. 23 in New York. If realized, it will be the first time for a Japanese prime minister to deliver a speech at the UNGA since then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi did in 2005. Fukuda is also looking into the possibility of attending two UN meetings -- a UN High Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs on Sept. 22 and the Millennium Development Goal Summit on Sept. 25.

7) Feng Ji-tai to be appointed as Taiwan's top envoy to Japan

SANKEI (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)
August 20, 2008

Shuto Hasegawa, Taipei

Taiwan's Foreign Affairs Ministry announced yesterday that it informally decided to appoint Feng Ji-tai, an aide to President Ma Ying-jeou and former ambassador to the Dominican Republic, as the next top envoy to Tokyo. Feng, aged 62, has little experience in Taiwan-Japan relations. However, he lived in Japan for five years with his father, a diplomat, when he was an elementary and junior-high school student.

Feng, who studied in the United States, speaks fluent Spanish. He worked as an expert on international affairs in Ma's office during the presidential race. He once accompanied Ma on a trip to Japan. With the appointment of Feng, Ma seems to be reflecting his view in Taiwan-Japan relations.

8) Agriculture Minister Ota expresses desire to hold G-8 ministerial in Japan later this year

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)
August 20, 2008

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Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Seiichi Ota met with his Russian counterpart Alexei Gordeyev at his office yesterday and expressed his desire to hold the first Group of Eight (G-8) agricultural ministerial in Japan later this year. In the July G-8 Summit (Hokkaido Toyako Summit), a decision was made to hold a G-8 agricultural ministerial to discuss the issue of soaring food prices, but the timing and place for its first session remained undecided. Gordeyev welcomed Ota's proposal to hold the meeting under Japan's lead.

9) Situation in extraordinary Diet session may become tense, with possible Lower House dissolution looming

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Excerpt)
August 20, 2008

The government and the ruling coalition decided yesterday to convene in mid-September the next extraordinary Diet session, which may affect the fate of the Fukuda administration. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda has insisted on the need to put high on the agenda a bill designed to extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean beyond its expiration in January. But the New Komeito remains opposed to the idea of premising the Diet schedule on a revote in the House of Representatives to pass the bill. Now that Fukuda is facing difficulty in steering the government, the situation in the upcoming Diet session is highly likely to become tense, with eyes on a dissolution of the House of Representatives for a snap election.

10) LDP's Nakagawa says new antiterror legislation may trigger Diet dissolution

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
August 20, 2008

Hidenao Nakagawa, former secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, has indicated that the LDP should pass a bill amending the new Antiterrorism Special Measures Law to extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean while being prepared for the possibility of the House of Representatives being dissolved for a general election. "This legislation is a major point of contention," Nakagawa said in a seminar of the LDP's Machimura faction held yesterday afternoon at a hotel in Kanagawa Prefecture's Hakone Town. "If the DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan or Minshuto) stands against enacting this legislation, we will then have to seek the people's judgment in a fair manner under Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on whether Japan will remain a nation that makes international contributions or whether Japan will cave in to terrorism," he added.

11) Government, ruling bloc to informally ask DPJ for policy talks, including continuation of refueling operation

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
August 20, 2008

The government and ruling coalition have decided to urge the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan to hold policy talks with them with the aim of discussing the questions of continuing the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean and of establishing a consumer affairs agency with an eye on convening the

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next extraordinary Diet session on September 12. As the venue for talks, they envisage revision talks on bills by committee directors

of the ruling and opposition blocs.

12) Noda reveals intent to run in DPJ presidential election

ASAHI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
August 20, 2008

Yoshihiko Noda, 51, chairman of the Public Relations Committee of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), yesterday said to his aides that he will run in the upcoming party presidential election, which will be officially announced on Sept. 8. Within the party, many members believed that President Ozawa would win a third term without a formal vote, but those supporting Noda will coordinate views and soon hold a press conference to formally announce his candidacy.

13) Defense Minister Hayashi discusses Futenma and other issues with Governor Nakaima in Okinawa

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Abridged slightly)
August 20, 2008

Defense Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, visiting Okinawa for the first time yesterday since assuming office, discussed the Futenma relocation issue and other matters with Governor Hirokazu Nakaima at the prefectural government office.

Nakaima asked for bringing the Futenma issue to an early settlement while giving consideration to local residents, saying: "Local residents want to see the envisaged (replacement facility) moved offshore from the bilaterally agreed plan. In implementing the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, it is essential to obtain local understanding and cooperation."

Hayashi said: "I would like to see (the working-level team established by the central and Okinawa governments) finalize a variety of subjects."

14) Defense minister negative about Futenma replacement facility's offshore relocation

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2008

Defense Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi met with Okinawa Prefecture's Governor Hirokazu Nakaima yesterday at the Okinawa prefectural government office in the city of Naha. In the meeting, Hayashi and Nakaima discussed the intergovernmental agreement between Japan and the United States to relocate the U.S. military's Futenma airfield in the city of Ginowan to a coastal area of Camp Schwab, a U.S. military base in the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago. Hayashi indicated a negative view about the governor's proposal to move the Futenma replacement facility's site to an offshore area. "It's difficult to change the alternative facility's site without rational reason," Hayashi said.

15) Government's decision on Futenma relocation likely to slip to next spring or later

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
August 20, 2008

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Whether or not the government can finish relocating Futenma Air Station from Ginowan to the coastal area of Camp Schwab in Nago by 2014 as initially planned is a delicate question.

Okinawa, Nago and other affected municipalities have asked the government to move the envisaged replacement facility offshore from its original plan for fear of deterioration of the environment surrounding residents near Camp Schwab. Meanwhile, the U.S. side has been maintaining its stance of not allowing any changes to the plan.

The results of the environmental impact assessment, now underway in the vicinity of the planned replacement facility, will not come out

until next spring or later. For this reason, the government, finding itself torn between Okinawa and the U.S., intends to postpone its final decision until then.

Meanwhile, Governor Hirokazu Nakaima has suggested that he will not authorize the project to use the surface of public waters in the event Okinawa's request is rejected. Difficulty in talks with concerned municipalities might significantly delay the plan to begin reclamation work in 2010. The government is likely to find itself under a lot of pressure for ironing out differences in the views between Okinawa and the United States.

16) 1953 MOJ directive urged regional public prosecutors offices to cautiously handle criminal cases involving U.S. service members

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2008

It has become clear through Ministry of Justice (MOJ) internal documents that its Criminal Affairs Bureau in 1953 informed the regional public prosecutors offices and other entities to cautiously exercise jurisdiction regarding criminal cases involving U.S. service members in Japan.

Documents drawn up in 1972 by the bureau regarding criminal case jurisdiction for U.S. service members list and explain Japan-U.S. agreements and MOJ notices on the handling of criminal cases involving U.S. service members based on the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement. A 1953 bureau chief notice reads: "Operationally, consideration must be paid in an extremely cautiously manner in view of U.S. Army rank and other factors." Regarding an incident involving an on-duty U.S. service member over which Japan does not have primary jurisdiction, the notice indicates that in determining whether or not the incident occurred in the line of duty, an on-duty certificate issued by a commander is insufficient as evidence unless there is counterevidence. Regarding the question of whether the notices are still in effect, the MOJ simply indicated: "Some are still effective and some are not."

The MOJ had been keeping the documents in the ministry as classified materials until the document found their way out of the ministry. The National Diet Library (NDL) got hold of them in 1990. They had been open to the public since 1991. Becoming aware of this in May 2008, the ministry asked the NDL to keep them secret, saying that it could damage the country diplomatically. The NDL closed the documents to the public on June 23. An NDL source said: "We have simply followed our internal procedures. It was not that we have received pressure from the Justice Ministry." A MOJ official said:

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"Upon holding talks, we would like to disclose some of the information if possible."

17) Japanese, ROK chief negotiators agree to strengthen cooperation on North Korea

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 20, 2008

Akitaka Saiki, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, met yesterday at his ministry with Kim Sook, South Korea's chief envoy to the six-party talks. In the meeting, the two chief negotiators agreed to strengthen cooperation in order to push forward with the six-party talks. Kim, after the meeting, expressed hope for Japan's participation in energy support for North Korea. He told reporters:

"Significant progress was made on the abduction issue (in the recent Japan-DPRK talks). It is necessary to bring about a situation under which Japan can join the assistance."

SCHIEFFER